REMARKS

Applicants initially wish to point out that the specification has been amended to be consistent with corrected formal drawings which are being submitted herewith. The drawings have been amended to illustrate more clearly the areas of the vehicle component which include the expandable sealant/flow control agent of the present invention and to illustrate the cavities which are covered by the sealant. The Examiner is requested to indicate his approval of the drawings in his next communication.

In the latest Office Action, claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. The Examiner has taken the position that the specification does not provide enablement for the melting of the flow control agent. Applicants have now reworded the claim to recite that the sealant and flow control agent are heated to the recited temperature such that the sealant flows into the gap or cavity. Basis for this amendment may be found in the specification at page 3, lines 19-21. Claim 21, as amended, is now believed to be in compliance with §112.

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. With this amendment, claim 16 has been cancelled.

Claims 15, 18-19, and 23-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Johnson et al. With regard to claims 15 and 18-19, the Examiner acknowledges applicants' argument that Johnson et al. do not teach a flow control agent as claimed, i.e., their film layer does not melt and flow when heated (see Johnson et al. claim 1). However, the Examiner asserts that applicants have not defined or claimed their flow control agent as flowing *during the application of the sealant.* Accordingly, applicants have further amended claim 15 to recite that the sealant and flow control agent melt and flow during the application of the sealant to a gap or cavity. See the specification at page 3, lines 19-21. Claim 15 as amended, and claims 18-19 and 23-24 which depend therefrom, are clearly patentable over Johnson et al.

With regard to claim 25, the Examiner asserts that the claim recitation that the sealant and flow control agent are adapted to seal gaps or cavities up to 100 mm in

width "includes gaps much smaller than 100 mm," and concludes that Johnson et al. meet this limitation because they teach using their composition to seal washer gaps which are smaller than 100 mm. The Examiner appears to have misinterpreted the language of the claim. The language recites that the combination is adapted to seal a gap or cavity in a component of **up to 100 mm** in width. The fact that the composition of Johnson et al. may be used to seal gaps smaller than 100 mm in width does not mean that the composition can seal a gap having a width of 100 mm as recited in the claim. Obviously a composition that can only seal a gap of 10 mm is incapable of sealing a gap or cavity having a width of 100 mm. Further, Johnson et al. do not teach or suggest a sealant and flow control agent which melt and flow when heated during the application of the sealant to a gap or cavity as recited in claim 25 as amended. Claim 25 is clearly patentable over Johnson et al.

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson et al. in view of Bien et al. However, as claim 16 has now been cancelled, the rejection is moot.

Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson et al. in view of Stokes, US 5,424,115 (newly cited). Stokes teaches a point bonded nonwoven fabric. The Examiner has cited Stokes for teaching that the web may include a polyolefin (such as polyvinyl acetate) and a polyamide. The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to use a polyvinyl acetate web or scrim in the invention of Johnson et al. However, the Examiner has provided no substantive reasoning or motivation as to why one skilled in the art would make the proposed substitution. There is no teaching or suggestion in Stokes that such a web could be used to control the flow of an expandable sealant during application of the sealant to a gap or cavity. Nor is there any teaching or suggestion in Stokes that such a web would have a melt flow rate which is lower than that of an expandable sealant.

Even if one were to make the proposed substitution, the claims would not be met as Johnson et al. do not teach a sealant and flow control agent which melt and flow

when heated during application of the sealant as recited in claim 15, from which claim 17 depends. Claim 17 is clearly patentable over the combination of Johnson et al. and Stokes.

Claim 22 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson et al. in view of Trainor US 4,529,740 (newly cited). Trainor teaches foamable hot melt compositions used to seal containers such as bottles. The Examiner has cited Trainor for teaching the use of a blowing agent, asserting that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to use a blowing agent in the sealant of Johnson et al. However, there is no motivation for one skilled in the art to make the proposed substitution. One skilled in the art would not look to a composition used as a sealant in closures for containers when making a sealant designed to seal large gaps or cavities in automotive components.

Even if one were to make the proposed substitution, the claims would not be met as Johnson et al. do not teach or suggest the claimed combination of a heat activated sealant and flow control agent which melt and flow during the application of the sealant to a gap or cavity as recited in claim 15, from which claim 22 depends.

For all of the above reasons, applicants submit that claims 15, 17-19 and 21-25, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. Early notification of allowable subject matter is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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